

# Open Space Community Interest and Opinion Survey

## *Findings Report*

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conducted for  
**Arapahoe County, Colorado**



by  
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(a division of ETC Institute)  
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In association with  
**Greenways, Incorporated**

December 2009

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# *Executive Summary*

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# **Open Space Community Interest and Opinion Survey**

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## **Executive Summary of Citizen Survey Results**

### **Overview of the Methodology**

Arapahoe County conducted an Open Space Community Interest and Opinion Survey during the fall of 2009. The purpose of the survey was to help establish priorities for the future improvement of parks, trails, open space and recreation opportunities in Arapahoe County. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout Arapahoe County. The survey was administered by a combination of mail and phone.

Leisure Vision worked extensively with Arapahoe County officials, as well as members of the Greenways Incorporated project team, in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system.

Leisure Vision mailed surveys to a random sample of 4,000 households throughout Arapahoe County. Approximately three days after the surveys were mailed, each household that received a survey also received an automated voice message encouraging them to complete the survey. In addition, about two weeks after the surveys were mailed, Leisure Vision began contacting households by phone. Those who indicated they had not returned the survey were given the option of completing it by phone.

The goal was to obtain a total of at least 800 completed surveys from Arapahoe County households. This goal was accomplished, with a total of 821 surveys having been completed. The results of the random sample of 821 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-3.4%.

The following pages summarize major survey findings.

## Major Survey Findings

- **Visiting County Parks, Open Space Areas or Trails.** Seventy-four percent (74%) of households have visited parks, open space areas and trails in Arapahoe County during the past 12 months. Of the 74% of households that have visited County parks, open space areas and trails, 66% visit them at least a few times a month.

Of the 74% of households that have visited Arapahoe County parks, open space areas and trails during the past 12 months, 73% have used walking and hiking trails, 43% have used playgrounds, 38% have used nature trails, 37% have used biking trails, and 36% have visited natural areas and wildlife habitats. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of households rated the physical condition of all the parks, open space, and trails they've used as either excellent or good, and 11% rated them as fair. No respondents rated the parks, open space areas and trails as poor.

- **Awareness of Arapahoe County Open Space Program.** Forty-two percent (42%) of households are aware of the Arapahoe County open space program.

- **Most Important Arapahoe County Open Space Program Goals.** Based on the sum of their top three choices, the Arapahoe County open space program goals that households feel are most important are: protect and preserve water quality in rivers and lakes (73%), preserve urban and rural open space and natural areas (54%), and protect wildlife habitat and corridors (44%).

- **Awareness of Sales and Use Tax.** Twenty-one percent (21%) of households are aware that 50% of the revenues raised through the sales and use tax are dedicated to funding outdoor recreation, parks, trails, open space acquisition and sports fields in communities throughout Arapahoe County.

Fifty-five percent (55%) of households feel it's very important for 50% of the revenues raised through the sales and use tax to fund outdoor recreation, parks, trails, open space acquisition and sports fields in communities throughout Arapahoe County. In addition, 26% feel it's somewhat important, 12% are not sure, and only 7% feel it's not important.

- **Need for Parks, Trails and Outdoor Recreation Facilities.** There are four parks, trails and outdoor recreation facilities that over 50% of households have a need for: walking and hiking trails (71%), natural areas and wildlife habitats (61%), nature trails (59%), and picnicking areas (54%).

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## Open Space Community Interest and Opinion Survey for Arapahoe County

- **Most Important Parks, Trails and Outdoor Recreation Facilities.** Based on the sum of their top four choices, the parks, trails, and outdoor recreation facilities that households rated as the most important are: walking and hiking trails (52%), natural areas and wildlife habitats (25%), nature trails (25%), biking trails (22%), and playgrounds (21%).
- **Options for Acquiring and Developing Open Space.** Based on the sum of their top two choices, the options that households most support regarding acquiring and developing open space for parks and outdoor recreation purposes are: acquire open space and leave undeveloped for future generations (52%), acquire open space to improve passive usage (51%), and acquire open space to improve passive and active usage (44%). Only 12% of households indicated that no new open space should be acquired.
- **Level of Support for Open Space Funds Being Used to Protect Ranchlands, Farms, and Open Space from Development.** Sixty-seven percent (67%) of respondents are either very supportive (38%) or somewhat supportive (29%) of open space funds being used to protect ranchlands, farms, and open space from development and protected for future generations, but limit public access. Only 15% are not supportive, and 18% indicated “not sure”.
- **Level of Support for Arapahoe County Leading the Effort to Purchase and Protect the Lowly Range as Large Regional Open Space Area.** Seventy percent (70%) of respondents are either very supportive (37%) or somewhat supportive (33%) of the Arapahoe County Open Space Program leading the effort to purchase and protect the Lowly Range as large regional open space area. Only 10% are not supportive, and 20% indicated “not sure”.
- **Level of Support for Arapahoe County Developing and Operating a System of Interconnected Trails Throughout the County.** Eighty-one percent (81%) of respondents are either very supportive (52%) or somewhat supportive (29%) of the Arapahoe County Open Space Program, in conjunction with cities and special districts, developing and operating a system of interconnected trails that can serve residents throughout the County. Only 8% are not supportive, and 11% indicated “not sure”.
- **Level of Support for Using Open Space Funds to Develop and Operate County Fairgrounds.** Fifty-four percent (54%) of respondents are either very supportive (20%) or somewhat supportive (34%) of using open space funds to develop and operate County fairgrounds. Only 20% are not supportive, and 26% indicated “not sure”.

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## Open Space Community Interest and Opinion Survey for Arapahoe County

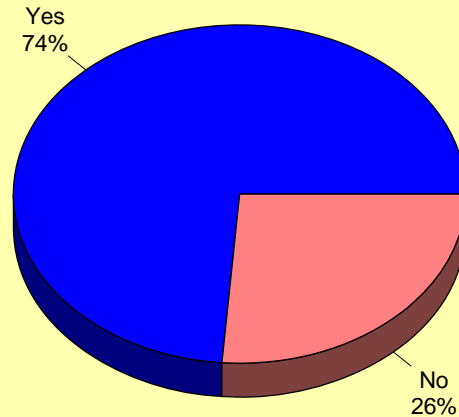
- **Potential Use of Interconnected Trails in Unincorporated Arapahoe County.** If the Arapahoe County Open Space Program developed a system of continuous interconnected trails in unincorporated Arapahoe County, 60% of respondents would use the trails at least once a month.
  
- **Allocation of \$100 among Various, Parks, Trails, and Recreation Facilities.** Respondents would allocate \$16 out of \$100 towards purchasing land to preserve open space and protect the environment. The remaining \$84 was allocated as follows: protect lands that preserve water quality (\$14), preserve agricultural and ranch lands (\$12), protect wildlife habitats and corridors (\$11), develop an interconnected system of parks, trails and open space (\$10), sports fields, playgrounds, and active recreation facilities (\$10), development of an interconnected trail system throughout Arapahoe County (\$9), trails and passive recreation facilities (\$8), protect views, vistas, and ridgelines (\$4), enhance or protect cultural and heritage areas (\$3), and “other” (\$3).
  
- **Voting to Renew the Sales and Use Tax for Open Space Acquisition and Protection, Water Quality, Trails, Wildlife Habitats, Regional Parks, and Development of Recreation Facilities.** Sixty-one percent (61%) of households would vote in favor of renewing the sales and use tax for open space acquisition and protection, water quality, trails, wildlife habitats, regional parks, and the development of recreation facilities. In addition, 17% might vote in favor, only 10% would vote against, and 12% indicated “not sure”.

# *Charts and Graphs*

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**Q1. Have You or Members of Your Household Visited Any Park, Open Space Area, or Trail in Your Community or Throughout Arapahoe County During the Past 12 Months?**

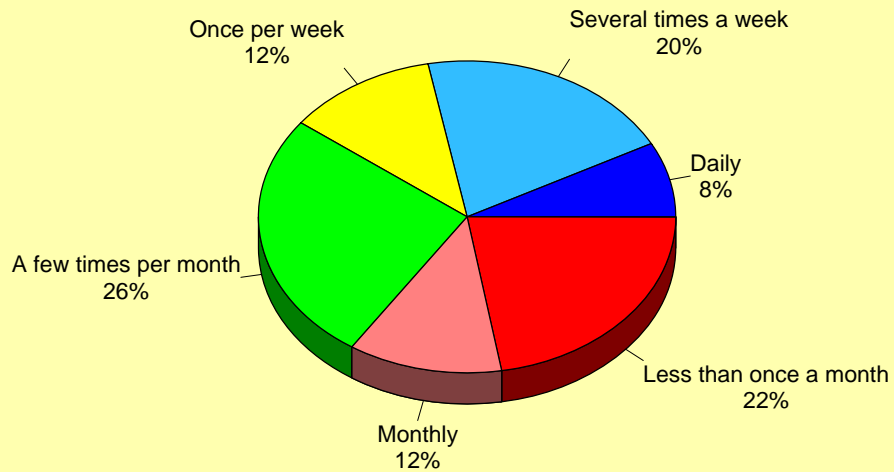
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

**Q2. How Often Do You and Members of Your Household Visit Parks, Trails or Open Space?**

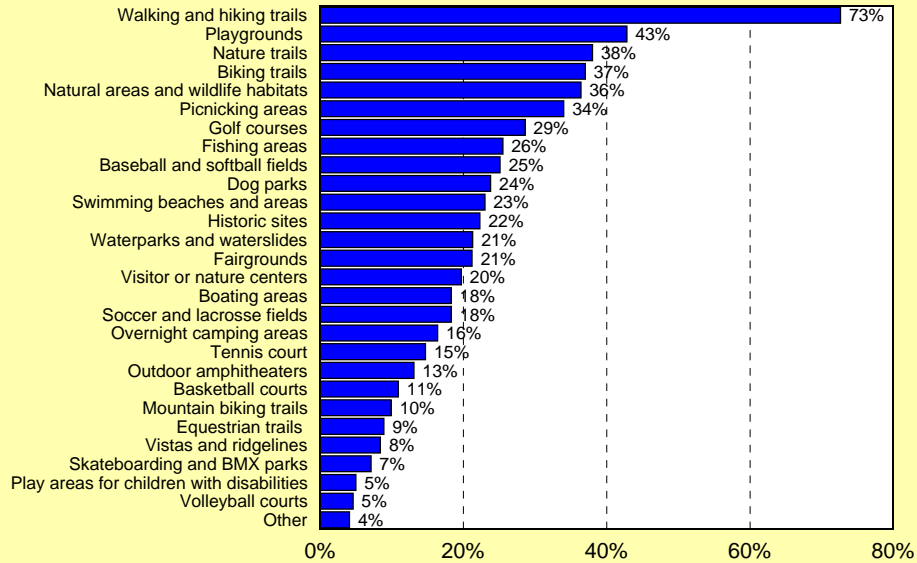
by percentage of households that have visited parks, open space areas, or trails in the past 12 months



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

### Q3. Outdoor Recreation Facilities That Households Have Used or Visited in Parks Over the Past 12 Months

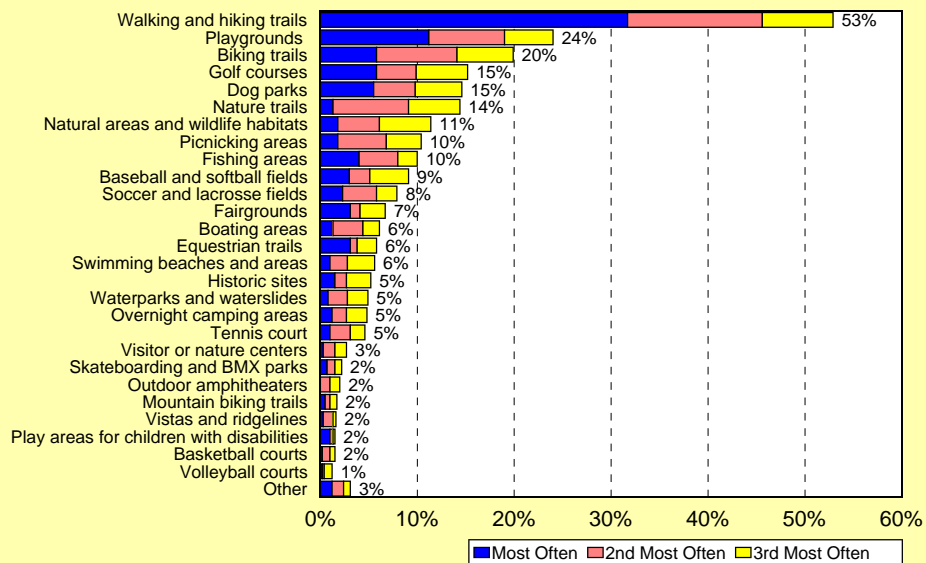
by percentage of households that have visited parks, open space areas, or trails in the past 12 months (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

### Q4. Outdoor Recreation Facilities That Households Have Used or Visited Most Often in Parks Over the Past 12 Months

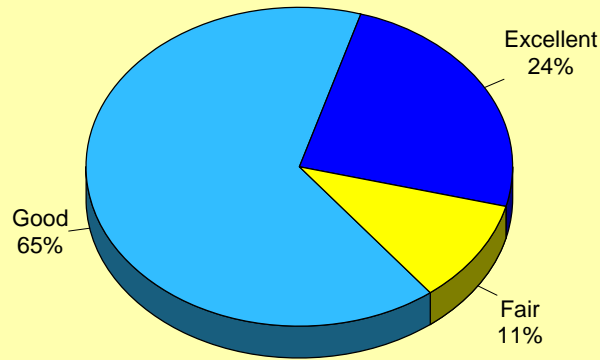
by percentage of households that have visited parks, open space areas, or trails in the past 12 months (sum of top 3 choices)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

**Q5. How Respondents Rate the Physical Condition of All the Parks and Recreation Facilities in Arapahoe County They Have Visited**

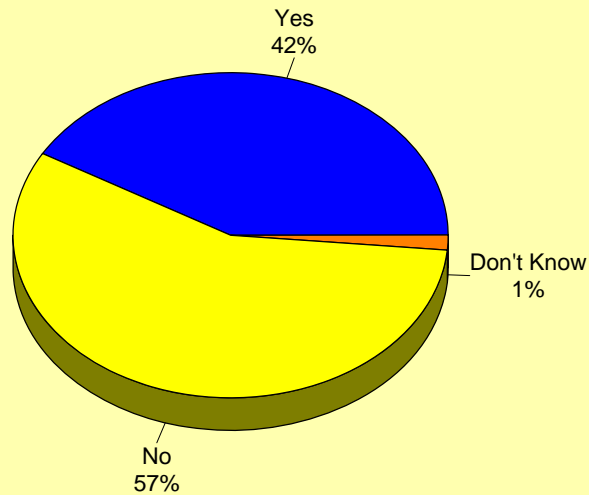
by percentage of households that have visited parks, open space areas, or trails in the past 12 months



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

**Q6. Are You Aware of the Arapahoe County Open Space Program?**

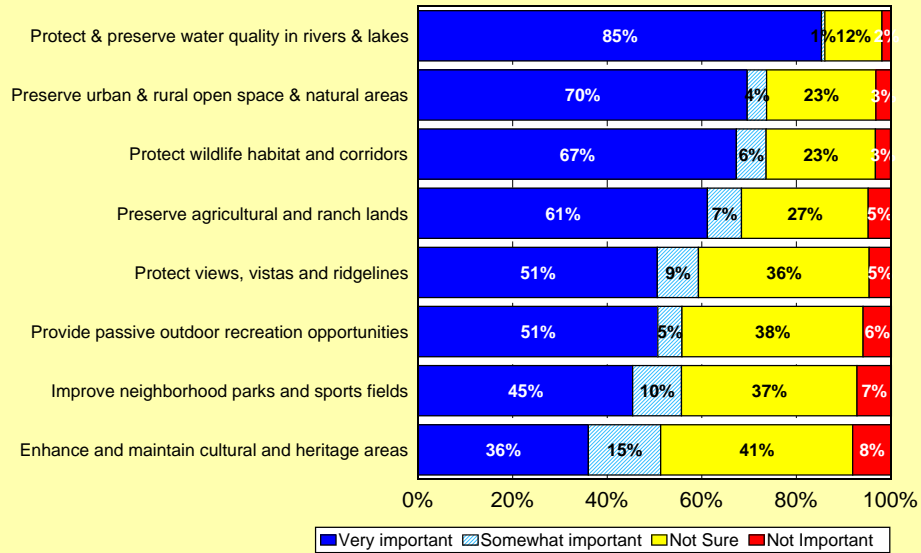
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

### Q7. Importance of Various Goals of the Arapahoe County Open Space Program

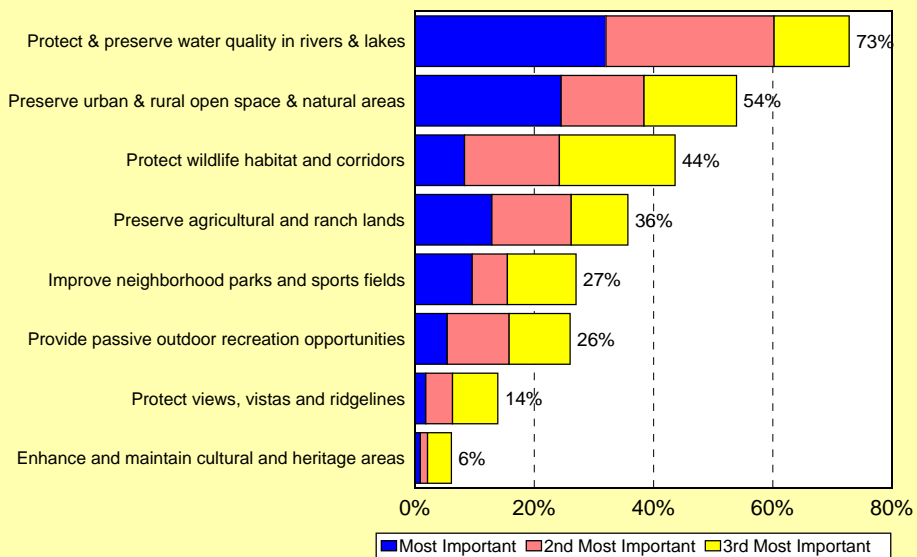
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

### Q8. Arapahoe County Open Space Program Goals That Households Feel Are Most Important

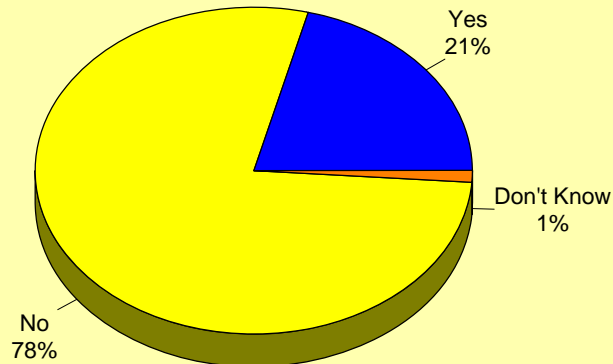
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

**Q9. Were You Aware That 50% of the Revenues Raised Through the .25 Percent Sales and Use Tax Went to Funding Outdoor Recreation, Parks, Trails, Open Space Acquisition, and Sports Fields in Local Communities Throughout Arapahoe County?**

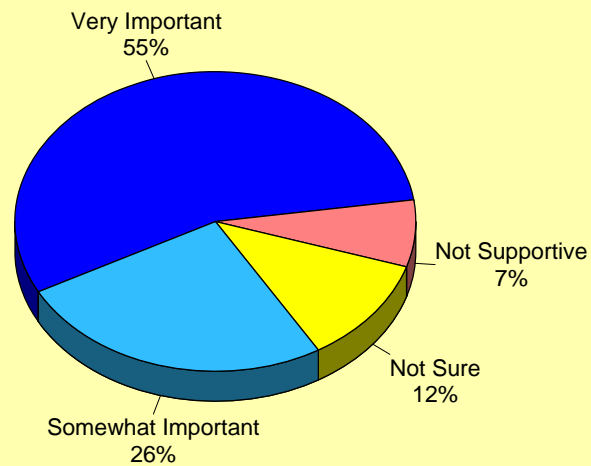
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

**Q10. How Important Do You Feel it Is for the Arapahoe County Open Space Program to Dedicate 50% of the Revenues Raised Through the .25 Percent Sales and Use Tax to Fund Parks, Trails, Open Space Acquisition, and Sports Initiatives in Local Communities Across Arapahoe County?**

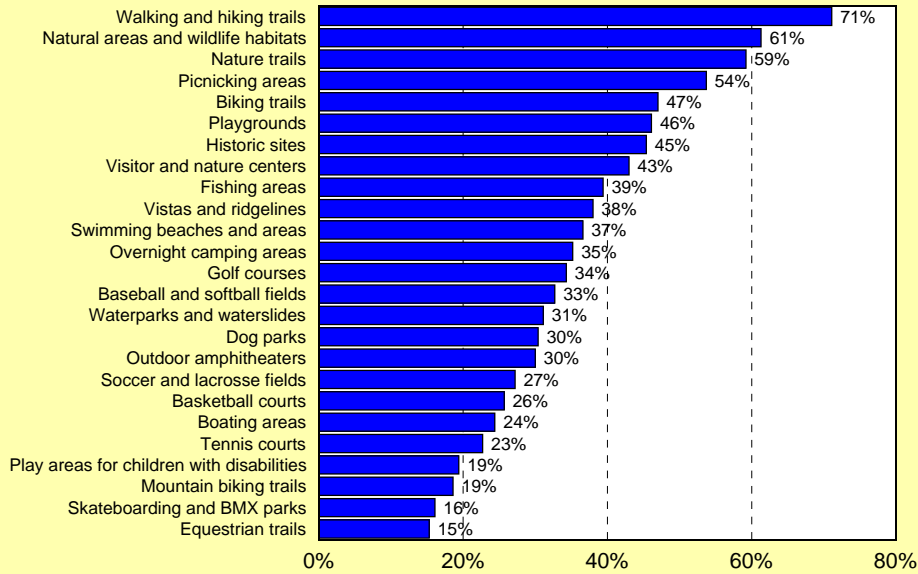
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

### Q11. Respondent Households That Have a Need for Various Outdoor Parks, Trails, and Recreation Facilities

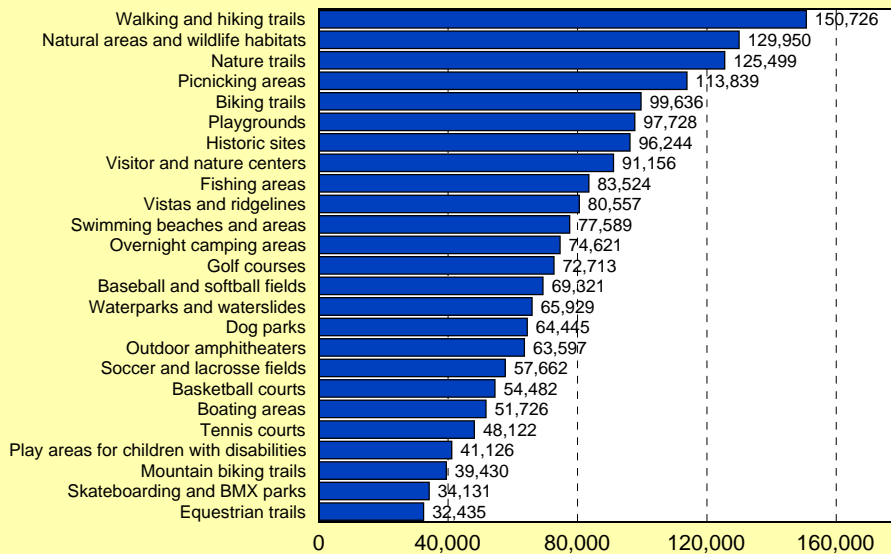
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

### Q11a. Estimated Number of Households in Arapahoe County That Have a Need for Various Outdoor Parks, Trails, and Recreation Facilities

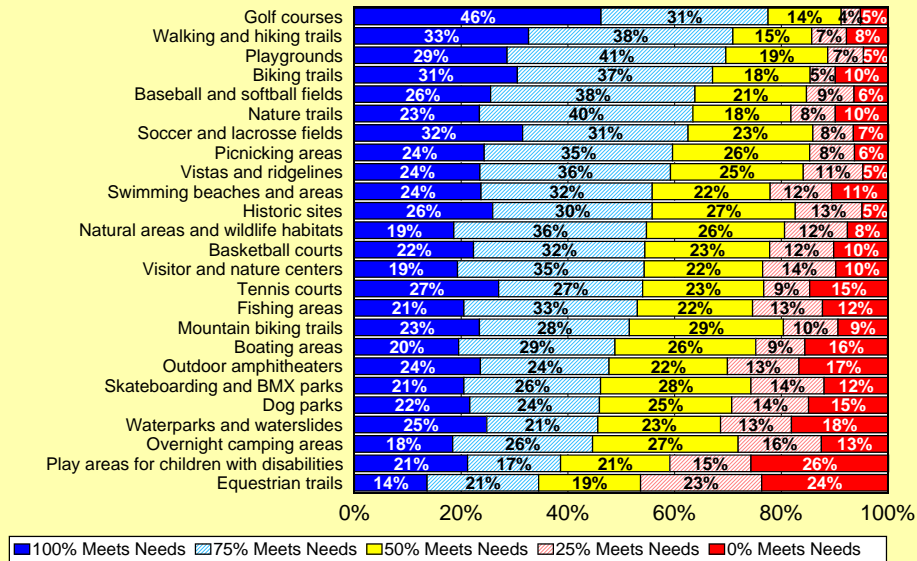
by number of households based on 211,991 households in Arapahoe County



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

### Q11b. How Well Outdoor Parks, Trails, and Recreation Facilities in Arapahoe County Meet the Needs of Respondent Households

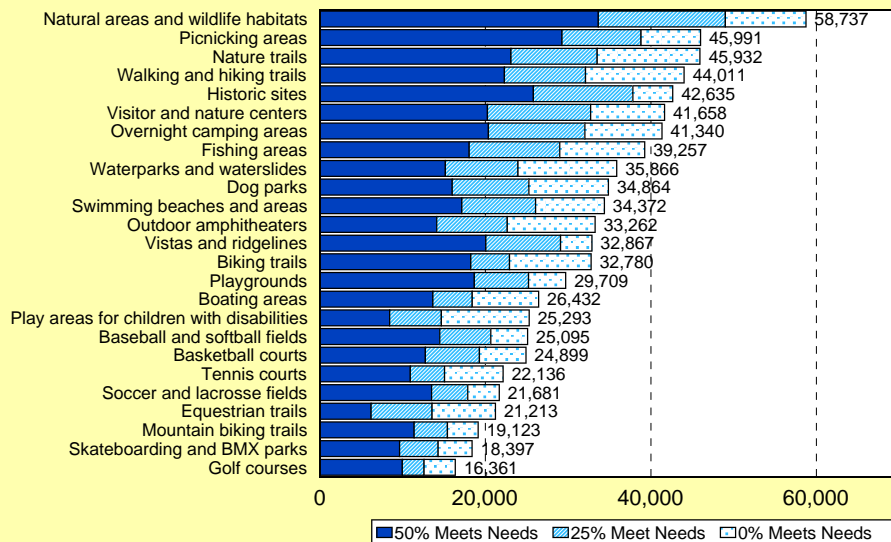
by percentage of respondents with a need for parks/facilities



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

### Q11c. Estimated Number of Households in Arapahoe County Whose Needs for Outdoor Parks, Trails, and Recreation Facilities Are Only Being 50% Met or Less

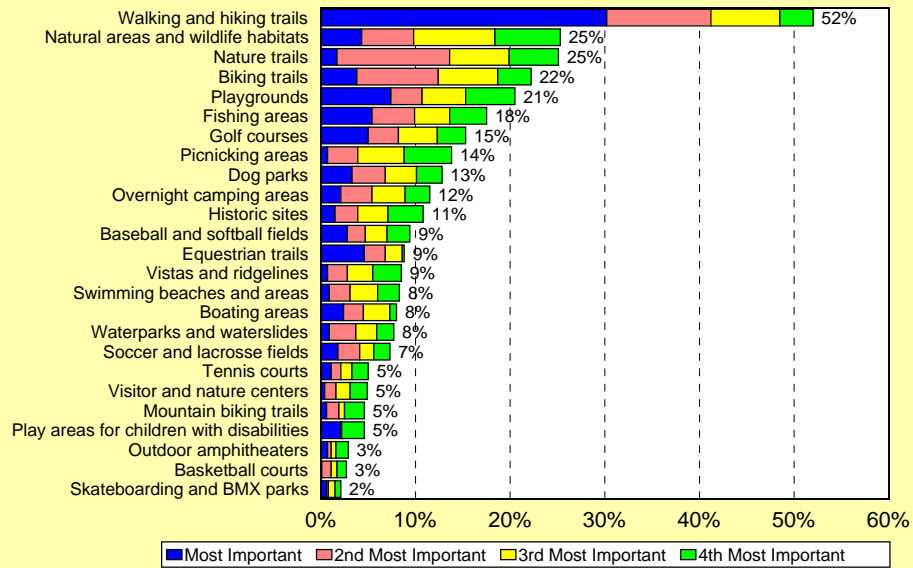
by number of households based on 211,991 households in Arapahoe County



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

### Q12. Parks and Recreation Facilities That Are Most Important to Respondent Households

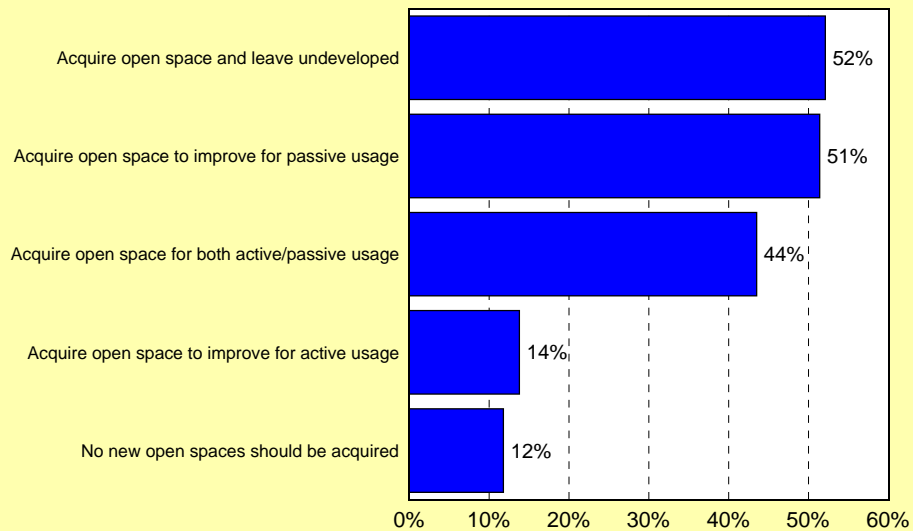
by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top four choices



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

### Q13. Options Respondent Households Support the Most for Acquiring and Developing Open Space for Parks and Outdoor Recreation Purposes

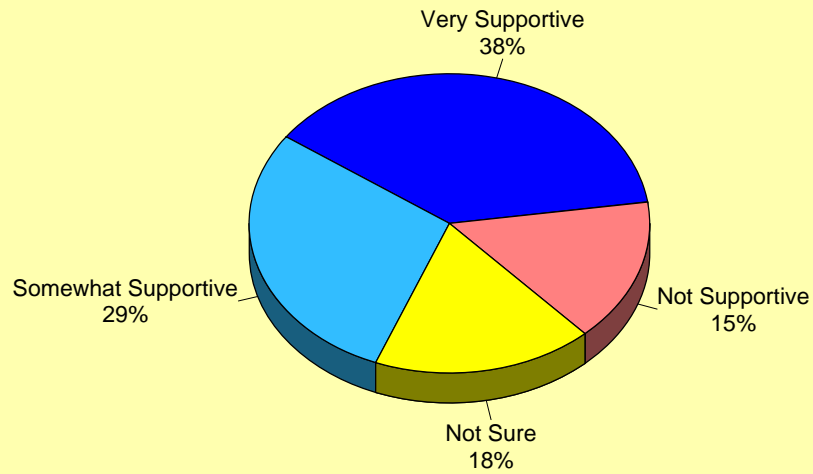
by percentage of respondent (two choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

**Q14. How Supportive Are You of Open Space Funds Being Used to Protect Ranchlands, Farms, and Open Space From Development and Protected for Future Generations, But Would Limit Public Access?**

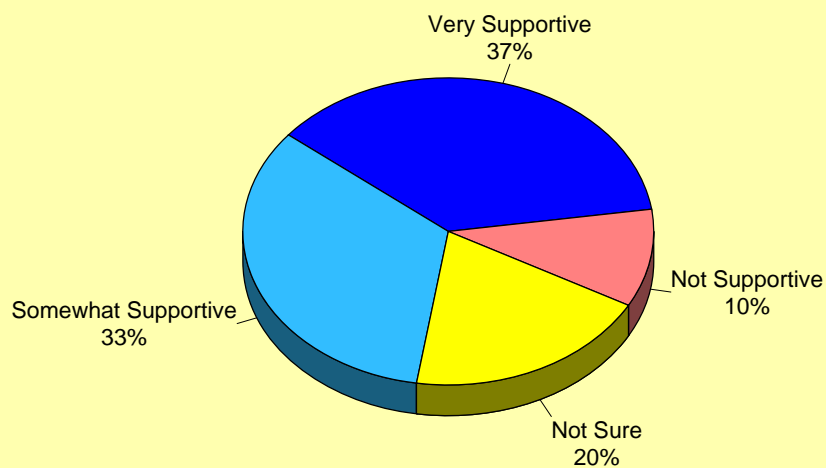
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

**Q15. How Supportive Would You Be of the Arapahoe County Open Space Program Leading the Effort to Purchase and Protect the Lowry Range as Large Regional Open Space Area?**

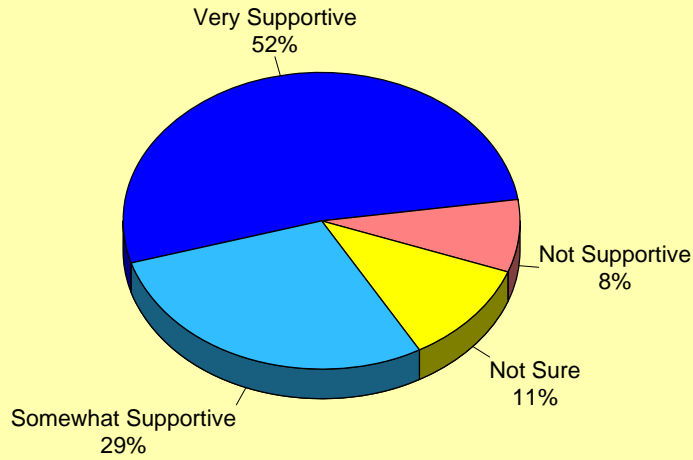
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

**Q16. How Supportive Are You of the Arapahoe County Open Space Program, Working in Conjunction with Cities and Special Districts, to Develop and Operate a System of Interconnected Trails That Can Serve Residents Throughout Arapahoe County?**

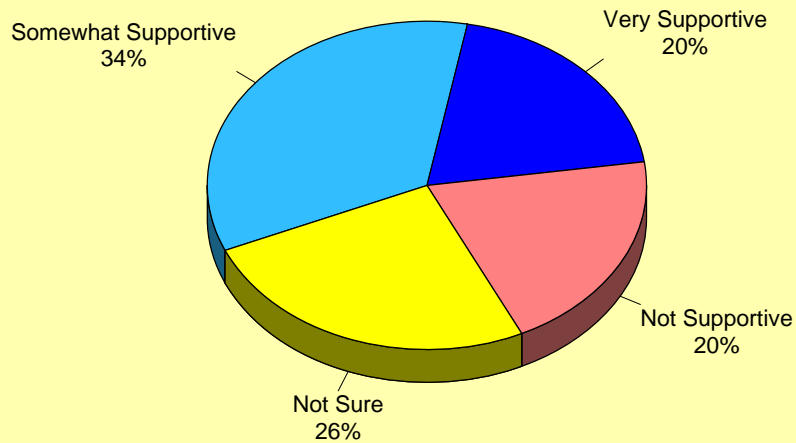
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

**Q17. How Supportive Are You of Using Open Space Funds to Develop and Operate County Fairgrounds?**

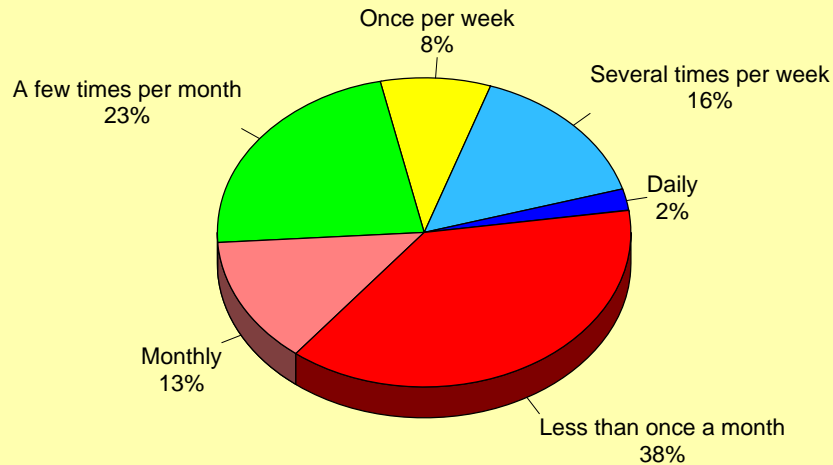
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

**Q18. If the Arapahoe County Open Space Program Developed a System of Continuous Interconnected Trails in Unincorporated Arapahoe County, How Often Would You Use the Trails?**

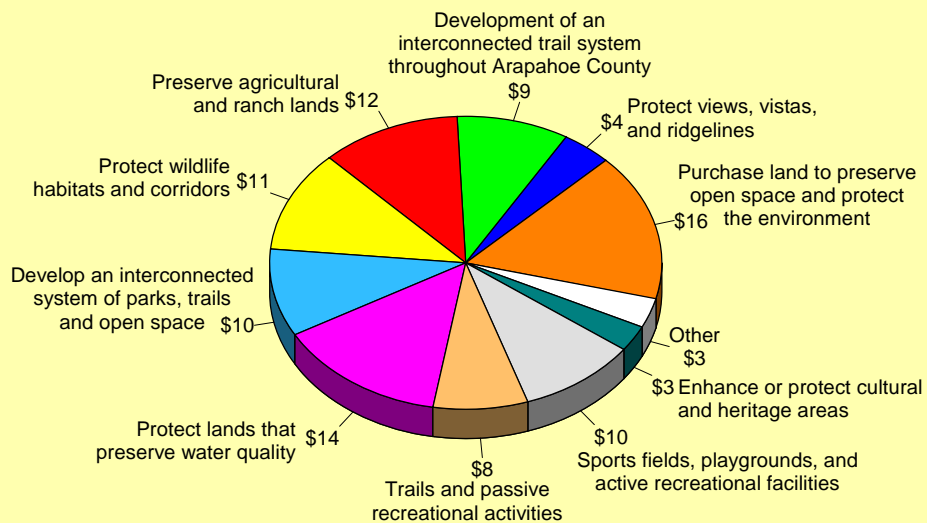
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

**Q19. How Respondents Would Allocate \$100 Among Various Parks, Trails and Recreation Categories**

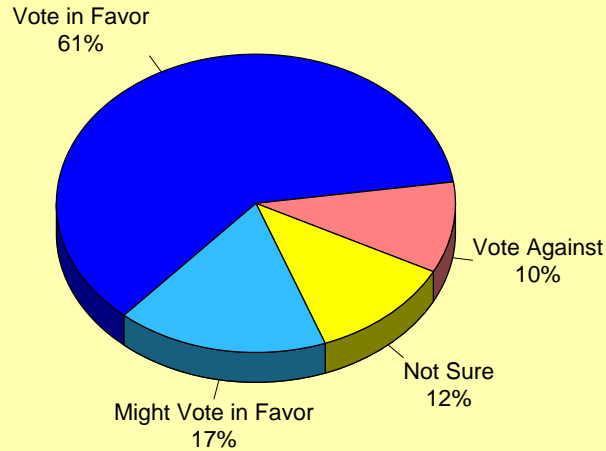
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

**Q20. How Respondents Would Vote in an Election to Renew the Quarter-of-a Penny Sales and Use Tax for the Open Space Acquisition and Protection, Water Quality, Trails, Wildlife Habitats, Regional Parks, and Development of Recreation Facilities That Are Most Important to Their Household**

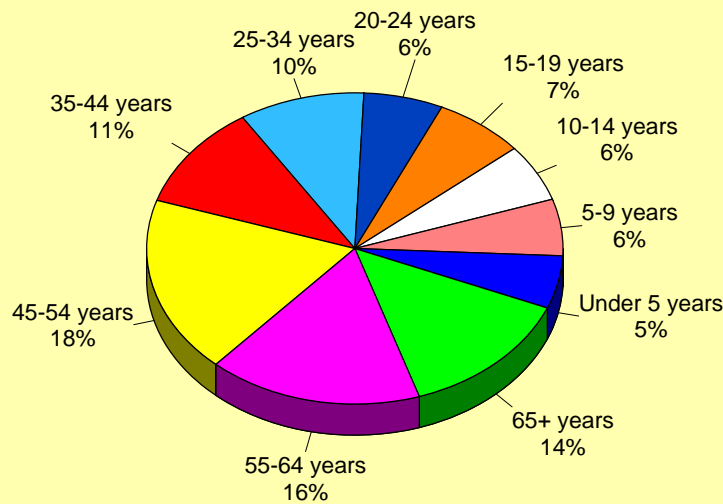
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

**Q21. Demographics: Ages of People in Household**

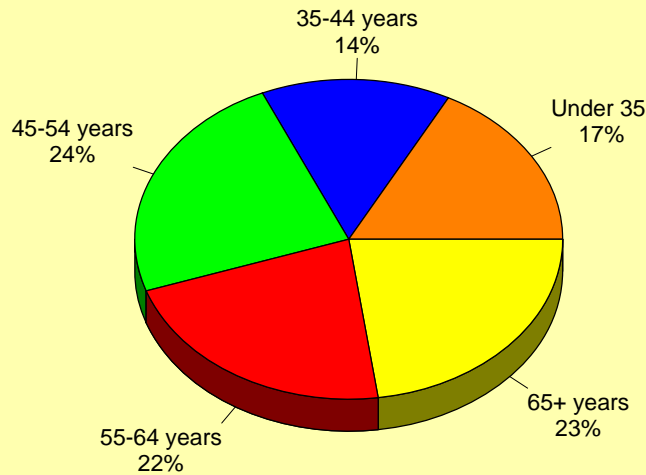
by percentage of household occupants



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

### Q22. Demographics: Age of Respondents

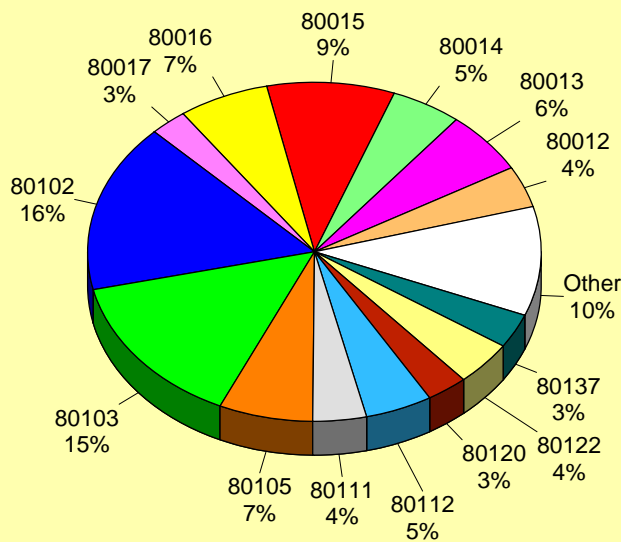
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

### Q23. Demographics: Zip Code of Respondents

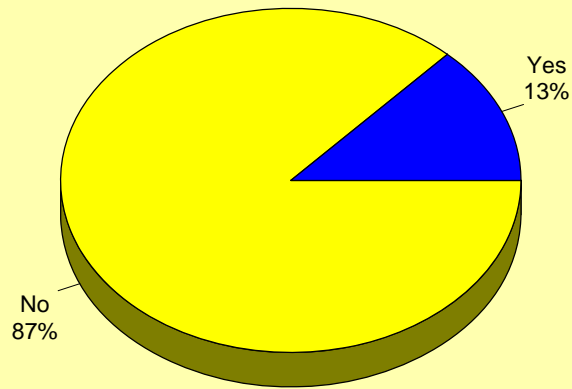
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

### Q24. Demographics: Are You or Members of Your Household of Hispanic or Latin Ancestry?

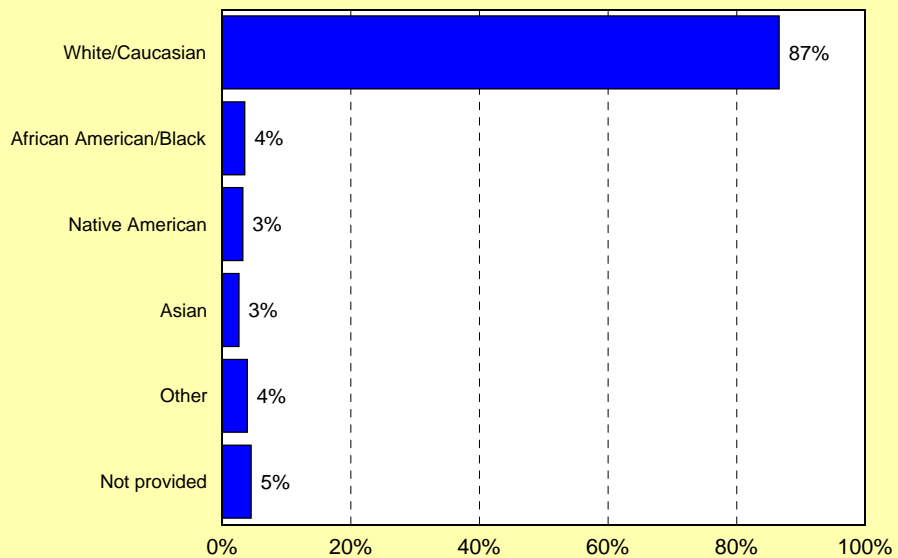
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

### Q25. Demographics: Race/Ethnicity

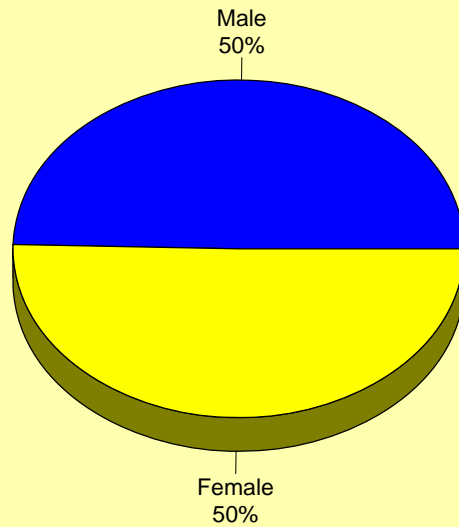
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

### Q26. Demographics: Gender

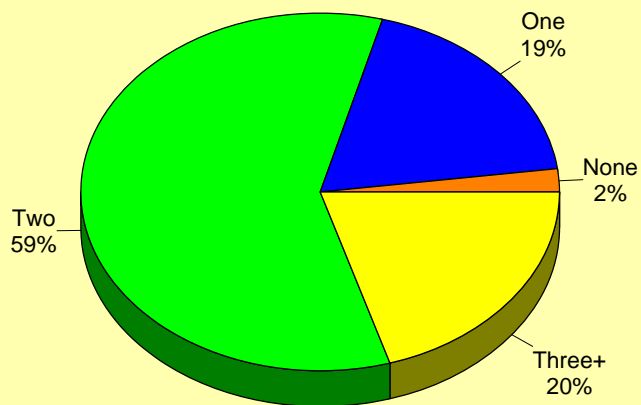
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

### Q27. Demographics: Number of Household Members That Are Registered to Vote

by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (November 2009)

